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AN HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
MERRICK, LONG ISLAND,  
1643-1900.

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WRITTEN FOR THE MERRICK LIBRARY

BY

CHAS. N. KENT.

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*Here in the Country's heart  
Where the grass is green,  
Life is the same sweet life  
As it e'er hath been.*

*Trust in a God still lives  
And the bell at morn  
Floats with a thought of God  
O'er the rising corn.*

*God comes down in the rain  
And the crop grows tall;  
This is the country faith,  
And the best of all.*

—NORMAN R. GALE.



## PREFACE.

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"Out on Long Island," is a phrase which to dwellers in Manhattan and Brooklyn is synonymous with pure air, temperate climate and fresh ocean breezes. Long Island is the natural suburb of these two great cities, and offers so many advantages to summer residents and for permanent homes, that its capacity in some parts has already been reached, while new villages or settlements are constantly springing up. The writer selected his summer home upon the South Side, in Merrick, nearly ten years ago. His subsequent experience there has proved he then made no mistake. A love for the place, with an ever growing desire to do it justice is his excuse for all that follows.

During the progress of the work he has consulted and now quotes from: *Histories of Long Island*, by Nathaniel S. Prime, Benjamin F. Thompson, and Silas Wood; *Colonial History of New York*, American Archives and Documentary History of New York (Lenox Library); *History of New York*, by Thomas Jones; *Legends of Fire Island Beach*, Edward Richardson; *Colonial Documents* (Union League Club); *McMaster's History of the People*; *Disosway's Early Churches*, and *Daniel Neal's History of New England*.

In giving copies from old documents the original spelling has been preserved.

The author is indebted for valuable information to Mrs. Elijah Smith, Mr. Gilbert Smith, Mr. George T. Hewlett, Mr. William E. Hewlett, Mr. Frank Miller and Mr. Chauncey Smith to all of whom he acknowledges his obligations with many thanks.

CHAS. N. KENT.

MERRICK, September, 1900.



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AN HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
MERRICK, LONG ISLAND.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Land embraced within the boundaries of "Heempstede" appeared, to English colonists, as early as 1640, most favorable for agricultural increment, healthful surroundings and permanent homes, of any upon Long Island's shores. Here an attempt at colonization was accordingly made in the spring of that year.

Winthrop writes: "Divers inhabitants of Linne agreed with Lord Sterling's agent, one Mr. Farret, for a parcel of the isle near west end, and agreed with the Indians for their right." It is elsewhere recorded that they "bought of Farret the privilege of buying of the Indians, a tract eight miles square, in consideration of a payment to him of four bushels of maize." Unfortunately for this first colony, the title of Lord Sterling to the whole of Long Island, under an original grant from James I, was

not recognized by the Dutch governor, Kieft, who, in 1639 purchased of the Manhassetts "all land east of the Rockaways to Fire Island, and north to Martin Gerretsen's Bay"—now Great Neck. The Dutch, moreover, being in possession, with military power to enforce their decrees, while Sterling had naught but his paper grant from the crown, soon made it too hot for the "Linne Settlers," and they were glad enough to escape with their lives, losing the four bushels of maize, which Farret declined to restore.

In Neal's "History of New England" (1720) there is given the following account of this proposed settlement:

"The Inhabitants of Lyn being Straitened for Room went over into Long Island, and having agreed with the Lord Starling's agent, and with the Indian Proprietors, they began a Settlement at the West End of it; but the Dutch giving them a great deal of disturbance, they deserted their Plantation in those Parts and settled to the number of an Hundred Families at the East End of the Island, where they built the Town of Southampton."

Reports concerning the land first spied out by the Linne people, the fertility of the great plains, the large tracts of woodlands free from underbrush and suitable for pasturage, and its delightful climate with health-giving properties, appear as we shall hereafter see in a second and successful attempt at colonization three years later.

The Indian names for Long Island were *Matowacks* and *Manatey*. Governor Nicolls, who succeeded



"Dutch Peter," called it Yorkshire, divided into three ridings. By an act of the Colonial Assembly, passed April 10th, 1692, it was thereafter to be known as *Island of Nassau*; but this designation was repugnant to the colonists; although the act has never been repealed it soon became obsolete, and after the lapse of years is rarely met with, even in legal documents.

Hempstead was so called by the emigrants who settled there, from a town in England known as *Hemel Hempstead*; and was written *Heemstede* by the Dutch, from several villages of like name in Holland.

Merrick is in the southern part of Hempstead, on the South Bay, east of Freeport and west of Bellmore.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY SETTLEMENT AND NAME.

The township of Hempstead was the first settled in Queens County. The colonists are said to have come principally from Yorkshire in England during the reign of King Charles I, "when both civil and religious liberty were prostrated by the illegal and tyrannical extension of the royal prerogative and by the intolerance of the established church." They tarried for a time in Wethersfield, Massachusetts, but soon passed on to Stamford, Connecticut, and from thence sixty-six families crossed the Sound to Hempstead, in 1643. Among them John Carman and John Smith decided to press on further south. Carman got as far as what is now the foot of Greenwich Street in Hempstead Village, where he pitched his camp and staked out his future home; but Smith, who appears to have been of a somewhat more venturesome spirit, continued on his way until he arrived at the beautiful meadow lands in Merrick, and saw before him the Great South Bay. The Eldorado had been reached. Confident that there could be found no better place, a confidence, which, it may be safely said after a lapse of two hundred and fifty years, was not misplaced,

he threw himself upon the ground among the friendly Indians surrounding him, and declared his intention of here making his home. He asked "To what tribe do you belong?" "Merrick," was the answer. "Then," said Smith, "we will name the place Merrick, and so it shall ever be."

Thompson, who is regarded as the best authority in matters appertaining to Long Island, writes the name *Merric*, *Meroke* and *Merikoke*. Flint prefers *Merikoke* and *Meroke*, while the older settlers adhere to *Merock*, *Meroque* and *Merikoke*. Whatever may have been the correct spelling, and doubtless there is authority for each, the Merrick of to-day derives a clear title to the name from its Indian inhabitants. The only other like geographical divisions are Merrick County, Nebraska—so called after Elvira Merrick, wife of Henry W. De Puy, speaker of the House, when the county in question was organized. It is not unlikely that these people were sometime dwellers upon our shores, and have thus endeavored to perpetuate a recollection of their ancestral homes; and there is also a Merrick in Massachusetts, on the Connecticut River opposite Springfield.

In old deeds and wills, one comes across "Little Merrick" and "Greater Merrick," a distinction now quite unknown. Greater Merrick included all land west of what is now Merrick Avenue to Mud Creek; and Little Merrick all land between Mud Creek and Merrick River.

## CHAPTER III.

### LAND TITLES.

Smarting from oppressions of the English government to which they had for so long a time been subjected, our colonists brought with them a keen sense of right and wrong, and a determination to deal justly with all men. Hence, we find them early endeavoring to obtain by purchase from the Indians in possession, both an honorable, and, so far as possible, a legal title to that part of the Island since known as Hempstead; this secured, they next bargained for and were granted by the Dutch governor, Kieft, a patent confirming the title and freeing them from Dutch control. Lord Sterling's pretensions, under letters from the crown, appear to have been wholly ignored, owing, doubtless, to the sad fate of those who attempted a settlement in 1640, and were finally expelled by the Dutch, after losing their "four bushels of maize," which was paid to Sterling's agent.

Rev. Robert Fordham and John Carman were selected as agents to treat with the Merikoke and Marsapeague Indians. An agreement was speedily made for the purchase of land in question, confirmed by writings, duly signed. Payments were to be made at intervals, and the

confirmation deed was to be executed and delivered, when final payments, thus provided, had been made. All this accomplished, the deed was issued and delivered in the words and form following:

“July the 4th, 1657. Stilo novo.

“Know all men by these Presents, that We, the Indians of Marsapege, Mericock, and Rockaway, whose Names be underwritten, for ourselves, and all the rest of the Indians that doe Claime any Right or Interest in the Purchase that hempsteed bought in the year 1643. And within the bounds and limitts of the Whole tract of Land, Concluded upon with the governor of Manhatans as it is in this paper Specified, Doe, by these p’sents, Ratifie and Confirme to them and their heires forever, freely, firmly, quietly and Peaceably, for them and their heires and success’rs for Ever to enjoye without any Molestacon or trouble from us, or any that shall pretend Any Clayme or title unto itt.

“The Montooke Sachem being present att this conformacon.

“In Witness whereof Wee, whose names bee here under written, have hereunto subscribed,

THE MARKE OF TAKAPOSHA.

THE SACHEM OF MARSAPEAGUE.

THE MARKE OF WANTAGH.

THE MONTAKE SACHEM.

THE MARKE OF CHEGONE.

THE MARKE OF ROMEGE.  
 THE MARKE OF WANGWANG.  
 THE MARKE OF RUMASACKROMEN.  
 THE MARKE OF ————.  
 THE MARKE OF WORONMCACKING.

In the presence of us,

RICHARD GILDERSLEEVE.

JOHN SEAMAN.

JOHN HICKS.

"Vera copia concordans cum originalis scripsit, per me,

JOHN JAMES, cler."

---

"Wee, the Indians above written, doe hereby acknowledge to have received from the Magistrates and Inhabitants of Hempsteed, all our pay in full satisfaction for the tract of land sould unto them, according to the above and within written agreement, and according to the pattent and purchase. The Gen<sup>n</sup> bounds is as followeth: Beginning att a place called Mattagarretts Bay and soe running upon a direct line, north and south and from north to south, from Sea to Sea, the boundes running from Hempsteede Harbour due east to a pointe of Treese adjoining the lands of Robert Williams, where wee left marked trees, the same line running from Sea to Sea. The other line beginning att a marked tree Standing att east end of the greate plaine, from that tree

and running a due south line and att the South Sea, by a Marked tree, made in a Neck called Maskutchoung and from thence upon the same line, to the South Sea. And we whose names are hereunto subscribed, do further Ingage ourselves and our successors, to uphold and maintain this our present act, and all our former agreements to bee just and lawfull; that the aforesaid Inhabitants of Hempsteed Shall Enjoye the Said Lands according to the Equity-marked bounds with all privileges thereunto Any way belonging or Appertaining, for them, their heires and success<sup>rs</sup> for Ever. And we doe binde ourselves to save and defend them harmlesse from any manner of Claime or pretence that shall bee made to disturbe them in their right, or any p<sup>r</sup>te thereof, hereby binding us and our success<sup>rs</sup> to cause them to Enjoye the same Peaceably without Any Molestacon or Interrupcon for them, their heires and success<sup>rs</sup> for Ever. Whereunto we have subscribed, this eleventh day of May, anno 1658. Stilo novo.

Witnesse:

WAAUTAUCH.

TACKAPOUSHA.

CHE KNOW.

MARTOM.

SAYASSTOCK.

PEES KOMACH.

“Subscribed by Wacombound, Montauk Sachem, after the death of his father, this 14th February, 1660, being a generall town meeting of Hempsteed.

“A true copy, Compared with the Originall and both of them being written by me. JOHN JAMES, Clerk.”

The Montauks claimed a somewhat uncertain sovereignty over all other Long Island clans, and, to avoid any possible complications, our colonists insisted that the deed in question should also bear the signature of the great Montauk, as complete evidence of transfer; so Wacombound comes to the next town meeting and makes his acknowledgment. It will, of course, be understood that the signatures consisted of the grantors' written identification, the Chiefs' marks being in individual forms as selected by themselves.

In November, 1664, Kieft's royal patent was issued, but contained a condition precedent that one hundred families should be settled in the township within five years. The patent was granted to Robert Fordham, John Stricklan, John Lamoree, John Carman, John Ogden, and Jonas Wood, but was understood to embrace the sixty-six families from Stamford, and the land "of the Great Plains on Long Island from the East River to the South Sea and from a certain Harbour, commonly called and known as Hempstead Harbour, and westward as far as Martin Gerretsen's Bay."



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INDIANS ON LONG ISLAND.

At the time of the first settlements by Dutch and English, there were resident on Long Island thirteen tribes, or, more correctly, clans, of Indians, in some degree dependent upon each other, all acknowledging a certain allegiance to the powerful Montauks. There is a generally expressed belief that these Indians descended in a direct line from the Delawares, but as their language was that of the Narragansetts, it is more probable they were an offshoot of the Algonquin races in New England. They were divided as follows:

*Canarsee*: Kings county and Jamaica.

*Rockaway*: Rockaway and a part of the adjoining territory.

*Merric* or *Meroke*: From the middle of the island, south to the bay, and from Rockaway to Marsapeague, or to the west line of Oyster Bay.

*Marsapeague*: A part of the same eastern land as the Merokes, and extending into Suffolk county.

*Matinecock*: From Flushing, through Queens county to Fresh Pond in Suffolk county, on the north side.

*Nesoquake* or *Nissaquogue*: From Fresh Pond to Stony Brook.

*Seatalocot* or *Satauket*: From Stony Brook to Wading River.

*Corchang*: From Wading River to Southold.

*Manhassett* or *Manhanset*: Shelter Island.

*Secatogue* or *Secatang*: From the Marsapeagues to Patchogue.

*Patchogue*: East to Southampton.

*Shinecock* or *Shinecoc*: From Canoe Place to Montauk.

*Montauk*: The Montauk peninsula.

As a rule these various clans were friendly to the whites, gave little trouble, and were always ready for a trade; but soon after colonization began, there was a noticeable diminution in their number. In an old history of New York, written by Dunton, now very rare but exceedingly interesting, it is recorded (1670): "There is now but few Indians, and those few no ways hurtful. It is to be admired how strangely they have decreased, *by the hand of God*, since the English first settling in these parts."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MERRICK INDIANS.

We have already seen that our pioneer settler, John Smith, was cordially greeted, upon his arrival at the meadows, by the assembled Indians, and he seems ever thereafter to have maintained friendly relations with them. Their camp was upon what was called "The Neck," and their burying ground in the nearby field which adjoins the property now owned by Mr. Hugh V. Roddy, on the west. There is some authority for the statement that the Merricks were a branch of the Rockaways, and those writers who maintain this theory spell the name *Merock*, indicating the latter syllable as derived from the first one in Rockaway. But so far as can be learned the Merricks were entirely independent of their western neighbors, although for a long time they paid tribute to the Marsapeagues on the east. Tradition has it that when John Smith saw this tribute delivered he asked for an explanation, and, on learning the full story, told the Merricks it was an imposition, and advised them not to submit to any such demand. His advice was followed; further payments were refused, and the angry Marsapeagues sought revenge in the slaughter of Merrick pigs, sheep and cattle. Again Smith came to the rescue. A

petition was sent to the colonial governor; he referred it to the famous John Underhill, who, with a company of infantry, appeared at Fort Neck, and so effectually defeated the Marsapeagues in a pitched battle that they never after recovered from the blow. In an old court record (1699) it is stated that "the marriage of John Underhill, Jr., and Mary Prior is pronounced null, and they are fined £5 apiece for breach and contempt of law, and to pay £10 more if they shall not be legally married before the next court, which being neglected they are fined £10 each." The son appears to have been a worthy descendant of the Indian fighter, John.

But the fate of the Merricks, like that of all other clans, was sealed. They are represented as being of a remarkably cheerful disposition, so much so as to have gained the sobriquet of "the merry Indians," by which name they were often designated. The last of this race, Henry January, married, in 1809, "Squaw Betty." One child, Sarah, was born to them, and she in due time married a Patchogue Indian with the somewhat doubtful Indian name of Tom Strong. He came to Merrick, and together they built a little house of logs in a clearing, less than half a mile northeast of the present railroad station. Tom and Sarah both died of smallpox within a few days of each other, leaving three young children, Nautchie, Jeanette, and Raphael. They were taken to the home of Mr. George Hewlett, who lived in the house now owned and occupied by Miss Kate V. Barnum on the

South road, and were educated and cared for by him until both Nautchie, Jeanette, and Raphael married negroes and disappeared from view. With them the Merrick Indians became extinct.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EARLY SETTLERS.

The Smith families were early in evidence on Long Island. Indeed, they were, from the outset, so numerous that something more than the simple surname, even with the Christian prefix, was deemed essential to properly identify them. Hence it came about that the first settler in Merrick, John Smith, was known as John Rock Smith and John Smith Rock, he being thus designated because of his ingenuity in building his house in Stamford around a rock too large for removal, which was thus made to do duty as part of the wall, and also as a back to the fireplace. His descendants are still known as the Rock Smiths, and at the present day include nearly all Smiths living in Merrick. There was also a Jonathan Black Smith, so identified, not from occupation, but from a decidedly unbleached countenance. Elsewhere resided the Block Smiths, whose progenitor placed before his house a horse-block for the convenience of his wife. The Weight Smiths possessed the only set of weights and measures in their neighborhood. Incidentally it may be stated that there were living in Patchogue not many years ago five William Smiths. A book of "Smith Wills" relates that each of the five was identified by a nickname

known and utilized among their acquaintances. "Point Bill" resided on a point projecting into the bay. "Peacock Bill" owned a bird from which the prefix was derived. "Wheelbarrow Bill" constructed an improved barrow having three wheels. "Submarine Bill" invented a contrivance for examining the bottoms of vessels. "Eleven-Dollar Bill," clerk in a store, took from a customer for a fifty-cent purchase one of the old-fashioned two-dollar state bank bills, giving in exchange ten dollars and fifty cents, with the subsequent statement that he supposed the two I's upon the bill meant that it was an "eleven-dollar bill."

The Carman family early sent representatives to Merrick from the settlement on Hempstead Plains. To John Carman was born, January 9, 1645, the first white child in the settlement. He was christened Caleb. The Carmans and Smiths intermarried, and appear to have held in common land westward from the eastern line of what is now the property of Mr. H. H. Cammann, on Merrick avenue. There is also evidence that these two families pre-empted the entire territory "from Merrick river, east to Cove Spring Landing, Merrick Cove, and from the bay north to Hempstead Plains."

John Rock Smith settled west of the present lakes on either side of Merrick road—his house on the north and barn on the south side. Jonathan Smith Black laid out his farm east of Merrick path, which afterwards became the Hempstead turnpike; and Jonathan Smith Rock set-

tled to the west, there being between them a wedge of land, known as the Hewlett farm. It is reported that this wedge was contributed equally by the two Smiths to induce the Hewletts to settle thereon.

Richard Valentine had land, undescribed, in Merrick as early as 1657. He was a town marshal and man of some parts.

One of the first houses was built by Jonathan Rock Smith. It is still in existence, and stands back from the present residence of Mrs. Elijah Smith. The house of Mr. William E. Hewlett was erected at about the same time.

From carefully preserved records now in the possession of Mr. George T. Hewlett and Mr. George M. Hewlett it appears that the first of that family to reach America was one of the judges who passed sentence of death upon King Charles (1648). The name in the King's death warrant is differently spelled, and it is supposed to have been purposely changed afterwards to avoid pursuit and detection. The first Hewlett settlement (about 1649) was on Riker's Island, near Hell Gate; the house was destroyed by Indians, although the family, being warned, escaped, and we next hear of them in Hempstead whither they probably migrated. There were then three brothers, George, John, and Lewis, and one sister. George and John both died unmarried, the former at Hempstead, the latter at Cow Neck. Of the others there is no record. The first George Hewlett to come to Merrick settled "be-



tween Whale Neck and New Bridge road," including what is now known as Cedar Swamp. There is also record of an early Hewlett settlement upon the farm of Mr. George M. Hewlett, which has always remained in the family. The original house has been incorporated in the more modern residence occupied at the present time. An old clothes press brought from England is still in its garret, as well as portraits of Colonel Hewlett and his wife. The people were largely tories in the early period of our struggle for independence. Washington wrote to the Committee of Safety (1776): "The inhabitants of L. I. have discovered an apparent inclination to lend a helping hand to subjugate their fellow citizens," and Jonathan Sturges writes to Governor Trumbull: "Long Island has the greatest proportion of tories of any part of this colony." The women, too, assumed a royal attitude, and went even greater lengths to signify their devotion to the crown. We may be pardoned, perhaps, for copying the following statement from an old record: "A young woman in our town [Hempstead] formed an intimacy with a Highlander in the British army. When the British were about to evacuate the island she was missing. The distressed father expressed his apprehensions to the commanding officer That his daughter had eloped, and was now in the Company of her lover. Forthwith the men were drawn up, and the father walked along the ranks, wherein he discovered his daughter, in Highland Uniform, and in the guise of a soldier, by the whiteness

of the skin where the garter is usually tied." The Hewletts were among the leaders of the Royalist party, and at times were in imminent danger, but finally a declaration of submission to the Continental Congress was drawn up, and among its signers were John Carman, John Smith Rock, William Smith Black, Benjamin Hewlett, Benjamin Hewlett 2d, Joseph Hewlett, George Hewlett, and John Hewlett. The Hewlett coat of arms represents two owls upon a shield, with the mottoes: "To stake one's life for the truth," and "By courage, not by craft." The name was sometimes spelt Hulit, and also "Owlett," the latter probably derived from Yorkshire dialect and the representative owls. In the last generation of our first George Hewlett's descendants there were twelve brothers and sisters. Of these Mr. George T. Hewlett and Mrs. Mary Willetts are now (1900) the sole survivors.

As an illustration of the deserved prosperity and enterprise which have ever characterized the Hewletts the following, copied from an old newspaper dated February 28, 1800, will serve as an example: "The curious are invited to a sight of one of the most astonishing productions in nature, a large ox, raised by Mr. George Hewlett. He is to be seen at Mrs. Delouf's, Flymarket. Admittance, one shilling. To give an idea of this ox, it need only be mentioned that he is nineteen hands high, seventeen and a half feet in length, and nine feet in girth, forming a tremendous mass of animation. Not to view him

as he now stands argues that want of curiosity which tends to enlarge the mind." And again, in 1831, we read: "George Hewlett, of Merrick, has a cornstalk on which grew thirteen perfect ears."

During all these early years the Indians were friendly, and gradually acquired some of the ways of the pale-faces, among which was a not too moderate liking for corn whisky and another well-known liquid, sometimes smuggled in from the Indies. They continued to occupy the Neck, reserving, as was the custom in alienating lands, "the rights to hunt, fish, and gather nuts." This condition is found in most of the Indian deeds. The longevity of early residents is a matter of frequent comment, and, indeed, the record, so far as subsequent generations are concerned, is still a remarkable one. Long life and Long Island are intimately associated with each other. It was recorded in the *New York Gazette* (1732): "Last week the wife of William Humphreys, of Hempstead, was brought to bed of a daughter, which child's grandfather hath a grandmother yet living, being of that age that she can say: 'Grandson, send me your granddaughter that I may have the pleasure to see of my issue one of the fifth generation.'"

The constabulary was the militia, and that there was a frequent demand for their services a single incident will illustrate: "John Jackson's Store, west of the Mill-dam at Merrick, was robbed by some Whale boats under Captain Dickie. The Militia went in pursuit. The western

division was under Joseph Raynor, and the eastern under George Hewlett. Dickie was captured, and sent to New York. Not long afterwards, George Hewlett, with two friends, was gunning on the marsh, when a whale boat rowed up, took his gun, silver sleeve buttons, and some money, and consulted whether they should take their hats and coats."

## CHAPTER VII.

### LAND DIVISIONS.

Although title to the township was made sure from the time of settlement in 1643, lands were held in common until 1647, when the first division took place among the original sixty-six owners. Other divisions rapidly followed, and "Akers of Medowe given out to the Inhabitants of Hempstead," says Flint, is a frequent entry in the old town books. Town meetings fixed the day to begin cutting salt grass, before which no one had the right to use sickle or scythe, for the marshes were held, last of all, in common. In 1712 the commons contained about 6,000 acres. In 1723 officers were appointed "to divide the individual land of Hempstead, and to lay to every man according to his just right, and to doe the work according to justice." But as late as 1792 we find a farm described as "pleasant, salubrious, *with the great privilege of Commonage* in the plains and marshes, enabling the proprietor to keep what stock he pleases."

Among the early transfers by deed is that of Richard Elloson and wife to John Smith Rock, son of John Smith, of land "on the north side of the Neck, called Rockaway, adjacent to a place called hungry harbor." This was in

1676, and seems to indicate that our first Smith was still prosperous.

A deed of a part of the undivided land transferred "by William Vallentine to Joseph Smith, of Hempstead, Queens County, on Nassau Island, in 1770," is in the following words:

"In consideration of the Just and full sum of five shillings well and trewly paid by Joseph Smith, son of John Smith, wefer, the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge myself to be therewith fully satisfyed, contented, and paid, have by these presents, given, granted, sold, and convayed unto him, the said Joseph Smith, son of John Smith, his heirs and assigns forever, that is to say, a ninepence patten wright is to be taken up in the Undevided land in the township of Hempstead, which said Pattent Wright Descended from William Valentine."

In one of the early recorded wills Silvanus Smith leaves to his sons "the salt and fresh Meadows on the South Neck called Great Merock and Little Merock."

The will of Jonathan Smith Rock appears worthy of further record, as quoted from in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WILL OF JONATHAN SMITH.


Be it known unto all men by these presents, that I, Jonathan Smith, of the Township of Hempstead [Merrick], Queens County, on Nassau Island; yeoman on this Thirtieth day of May, In the year of our Lord, one thousand Seven Hundred and forty-six, being very weak and Infirm of Body, but through Marcy my understanding at this time pritty well; and well knowing that my final change Draweth nigh, and that this mortal Body must give up this transitory Life; therefore I am willing to settle my worldly estate in peace and Tranquility among my famaly; but first of all I recommend my Soul to God that gave it to me, in hopes through ye merits of Jesus Christte to Inherit Salvation; and my Body I bequeath unto the earth, to be buried with a Christian Like Burial at ye De Scretion of my Executores hereafter named and appoynted. And as touching such worldly estate Where-with it hath pleased almighty God to Bless and Bestow upon me, I will, devise and dispose of in ye following manner: First of all, my will is that all those just debts which I doe owe to any manner of persons shall be fully Satisfied, Contented and paid in Such manner as is hereafter mentioned and expressed. Item, I will, order and

bequeath unto my eldest son, Jonathan Smith, ye sum of five shillings New York money, and also my Large Bible, to him and his heirs and assigns forever. Item, I will, give and bequeath unto my beloved wife, Elizabeth Smith, and to her heirs and assigns forever, my Riding mare that I have, as also all and Singular my movable or personal estate of what Nature or condition Soever (except what I shall dispose of hereafter) that is to say, ye use and benefit thereof after the same is sold by my executors at public Vendue. Item, I will, give and Bequeath to my sd well beloved wife ye use and benefit of my East Room in the House where I now Live with ye Appurtenances, and the one third part of ye use of my farme of Lands, &c., During her Widowhood. Item, I will, give and bequeathe unto my Daughter, Phelina Smith, her heirs and Assigns, one fether Bed with full furniture thereunto belonging, as also thirty pounds of Lawfull money of New York, to be paid unto her In some convenient time after my decease, by my executors out of my movable estate. Item, I will, and bequeath unto my three Daughters that are married, viz.: Elizabeth, the wife of Ezekiel Matthews; Jane Haviland, the wife of Benjamin Haviland, and Hannah Bedle, to each of them one cow and calf, and to each of their heirs and assigns forever. Item, I will, give and bequeath unto my daughter Philena her Riding side Saddle and her duch Spinning Wheal to her own disposall. Item, I will and bequeath unto my son, John Smith, and to his heirs and



assigns my Stalion, a cow calf and a gun which he now has in keeping. Item, I will, and bequeath unto my son Henry Smith, his heirs and assigns, two four year old Stears and a Gun. Item, I will, and Bequeath unto my son Cornell, his heirs and assigns my new Gun, a pair of four year old Stears and a gray mare which are to be sold at Public Vendue (with ye rest of ye moveables) and ye money arising therefrom, to be paid unto him when he shall arrive of full age. \* \* \* \* \*

In witness hereunto I have set to my hand and Fixed my seal ye day and year above said.

*His*  
JONATHAN  SMITH.  
*mark and seal.*

The house containing ye east room, given to his wife is still standing in rear of the present residence of Mrs. Elijah Smith, and to this lady the writer is indebted for a copy of the above will and many other valuable documents.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HIGHWAYS.

The old Merrick Path beginning near the present Hempstead turnpike and passing east of the house of Mr. Benjamin Seaman, in a northely direction to the plains, probably first did duty as a road in this part of the new township. It is said that one with sharp eyes can still discern its outlines. It was simply "brushed out," and indicated more distinctly by "blazed trees." This path, later on was known as the "Hempstead Road" and then, as the turnpike.

The Merrick Road, or as sometimes designated the great south road, came next in order. It was built in sections, not continuously; and not until about 1850 was it completed between Merrick and Freeport. Before that time its local terminus in Merrick was west of Merrick river, where a connection was made with the south-erly Freeport road, southwest to the old mills and again in a northerly direction into Freeport village.

At about this time (1850) a company was organized for the construction of the South Oyster Bay Turnpike including the Merrick Road from Babylon to the old Hempstead Turnpike in Merrick, and thence north to Hempstead Plains. The work seems to have been ac-

complished with but little delay and resulted in pretty general satisfaction to all but stockholders. The original road in Merrick ran within twenty feet of the front door of Mr. John J. Hewlett's house, now occupied by his son Mr. William E. Hewlett. When the Commissioners reached that point, in laying out the new turnpike, to obviate an unnatural curve, the course was laid further south, as the road now runs. To this the senior Hewlett strenuously objected, urging as a sufficient reason therefor, that it would "cut him off" and leave his house too far away from the travelled thoroughfare. A still more potential argument on his part was a refusal to take additional stock in the company if the change was insisted upon. This might have brought the company to terms, had there not been—unfortunately for Mr. Hewlett—another householder further west who insisted with equal pertinacity, that the southerly course should be confirmed, in order that he might thus secure a "larger door yard," and agreeing in consideration therefor, to take and pay for more stock than would otherwise be purchased by Mr. Hewlett. Such diplomacy was irresistible and the road was changed accordingly.

There were regular lines of stages on the new turnpike from Babylon to Hempstead—thence to Jamaica and Brooklyn. South Oyster Bay had a postoffice, and one was soon after established for Merrick in the old hotel and store combined on the Hempstead Turnpike north of the present railroad crossing. The building was de-

stroyed by fire in 1896. The Merrick postoffice was a general point for distribution, and the nearest station for people residing in Freeport.

To the west of Mr. Cammann's present residence, and extending from the road in a northerly direction was a high board fence erected to screen from view objectionable farm buildings further on. In course of time, however, the southerly boards of this fence were cut off at a reasonable height so that stages might the more easily be seen from the house as they passed to and fro upon the Merrick Road.

The Plank Road to Jamaica was built about 1854. It commenced at the junction of Hempstead Turnpike with the Merrick Road and extended over the latter in a westerly course, bridging Freeport swamps, and furnishing a direct thoroughfare between that village and Merrick. The new road was not a profitable investment and was soon acquired by the town.

Merrick avenue, extending from the Bay north to the railroad and thence to and beyond the camp grounds, is perhaps as fine a road with its surroundings as can be found on Long Island. It is, the greater part, beautifully shaded, and has a macadam foundation. Previous to 1850, however, it was but a cow path, more particularly designated as "Whale Neck Road," from the stranding of a whale at Whale Neck Point; which whale was later subdivided and transferred in carts over the cow path to settlements further north. A pair of bars then closed Mer-

rick avenue to the public at its junction with the Merrick Road. The necessity for making the path a highway soon became apparent, and it was accordingly set apart for that purpose and reconstructed. Freight from the Merrick dock, at the foot of this avenue, before the days of a railroad, was then received from vessels and conveyed in wagons to all parts of the surrounding country. Indeed, at this period, nearly all freight to and from Hempstead and New York was so transferred. The good ship "Native of America," commanded by Capt. Thomas Raynor, made regular trips between the two ports.

Within the last ten years the older roads have been supplemented by:

Kirkwood avenue from the Hempstead Turnpike near the residence of Mr. Benjamin Seaman, east to Merrick avenue, and south of the Merrick Library.

Lindemere avenue, from the southerly end, and around the east side, of the south lake to Merrick road; thence northerly, bordering the handsome grounds and residence of Mr. P. R. Jennings, to a junction with Kirkwood avenue.

Wynsum avenue, from the Merrick Road, west of Miss Barnum's, north to the railroad station.

Willomere avenue, from Merrick road around the westerly side of the south lake, to its southerly end. Bordering these avenues about the lake are some of the most desirable building lots still attainable. It is predicted that in the near future they will become the center of handsome residences.

To go back to an earlier date, we find what might now be called private roads, but laid out by Commissioners, and entered in the town records. The following is a copy of one of these entries:

“Articles of agreement made by the owners of a certain tract of Meadow Lands Lying in the Township of Hempstead on Little Merrick is as follows: Whereas, we the subscribers whose names are hereunto Written, Do agree for Ourselves, our heirs and assigns forever that we will take a Road that the Commissioners Shall Lay out. One Rod Wide In Leu of all other Rights or Priviledge that we Heretofore have had, to Pass to and From our Meadow, For the Use of Carting the Hay Cut on our Respective Meadows, Said Road to Begin at Duryea’s Bars, Running as the Path Now Runs to the Bars Near Jacob Smith’s and Timothy Titus’ House, and from thence To the Island as the Cross Way Now Is. One Rod Wide Eastwardly from the Ditch on the West Side of Said Crossway. The Priviledges above written are no Other than the Priviledges we had In the Old Road which we have given for the New One. In witness Whereof We set our Hands, Nov. 9, 1809.”

Remarkably good roads are found in Merrick and in no part of the Island are there more delightful drives or greater attractions.

The Merrick Road, extending from Brooklyn to the extreme eastern towns, is macadamized a good part of the way, with hardly an elevation above the general level

during the first sixty miles of its course. Merrick avenue, with its prolongation, Whale Neck Road, is paved in like manner and so also is the greater part of the old Hempstead Turnpike. Intersecting roads usually with hard and substantial beds extend in all directions. One may drive or ride towards any point of the compass, a longer or shorter distance, and return to the starting point without going a second time over the same ground.

## CHAPTER X.

### INDUSTRIES.

Agriculture naturally occupied the early attention of our colonists and has remained a principal occupation. Records show enormous crops gathered from productive soil, good prices in return for the same, and a gradual increase in the comforts and surroundings of the farmer. Nevertheless, we find him complaining of exorbitant taxes, illegal assessments, and protesting to the Colonial Governor his inability to pay them. It is on record that this contention came to naught, but once resulted in an edict from Governor Lovelace to "lay such taxes upon them in future as may not give them liberty to entertain any other thoughts but how they shall discharge them." This was in 1668.

The Merrick River was then a stream of some importance and for years a source of great value within the hamlet. Upon its banks were no less than four paper mills. The first, about a quarter of a mile north of the present railroad track was owned by Gilson Willis; Joseph Smart had another, still further north; the next belonged to Isaac Willis, and the last to F. S. Molineaux, but is now transformed into a grist mill. They all did a thriving business for years and furnished a good market for all



straw, farmers could bring to them. Rags came from New York and were returned in the form of white paper, by a regular line of packets, having a dock below the present residence of Mr. Gilbert Smith. There was every evidence of a long continued prosperity in this branch of manufacture, when that which has proved so destructive to the Eastern End of Long Island—the “Brooklyn Water Works Company”—by authority from the legislature, reached out into the township, like the octopus sucking through its tentacles, water from streams and springs, to its reservoirs and conduits, until the streams ran dry, the mills were closed, and so the industry came to an end. The several fulling mills which had long done a thriving business were also obliged to close for the same reason.

“Flotsam” and “Jetsam” were terms well known and understood. A copy of one recorded document bearing upon goods of this nature appears of sufficient interest to warrant its repetition:

“In March, 1814, the Privateer *Mars* ware Drove on Shore near the New Inlet, by the British Cruisers, and set on fire by them. We, the Subscribers, saved Sum property from her. Jacob S. Jackson and Thomas Treadwell made an agreement with the agent and part owner, Peter H. Schenck to Save the property from her to the Halves and Deliver said property when saved to New York to said Schenck and to have the one haff of the neate proceeds for saving the same. And the above

said property or part of it Whare Delivered to Mr. Schenck at New York by James Bedell, which said Schenck refused to make a settlement for. Now we the subscribers do agree that the sum of money that ware lodged in the hands of Patrick Mott should go towards bringing a sute against Mr. Schenck, and if not a sufficient sum to carry on the sute, we the Subscribers agree to pay all charges that may a Crew in carrying on said Sute.

“February the 14th, 1816.”

As a means for promoting industries, building churches, establishing schools and divers other public works, the lottery was frequently resorted to and was pretty generally in vogue. In 1763 the Reverend Samuel Seabury recorded in his diary: “The ticket No. 5866 in the Light House, drew in my favor, by the blessing of God, £500, for which I now record to my posterity my thanks, and praise to Almighty God, the Giver of all good gifts. Amen.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### SCHOOLS.

"There is abundant evidence," says Prime, "that the first settlers of all these towns, from East to West, considered the establishment of schools as second in importance to nothing but the institutions of the gospel, and many of them were as careful to bring their school masters as their ministers with them." Flint records that schools must have been opened immediately after the colonists settled in Hempstead. As early as 1671, we find an order, signed by Governor Lovelace, to the overseers of Hempstead commanding them to "cause speedy payment to be made to Richard Charlton, who kept a school; otherwise he will have good remedy against you at Law." In 1721 there was a school on Cow Neck, taught by George Sheresby.

The first school house in Merrick was built early in the last century. It was of rough boards and timbers hewn from logs—from its size evidently not intended for a large number of pupils. The remnants of this building may still be seen in rear of Mr. William E. Hewlett's residence, where until fallen into decay they did duty for many years as a chicken house. The old boards and logs bear indications that the boys then, as well as now, had

jack knives and knew how to use them; they record, cut deep in the wood, initials of many a girl and boy, long since passed away and of whom there is probably no other memorial extant.

The second school house, on the Merrick Road, east of Mr. Hewlett's, was erected in 1844, and used until the modern building further east was completed in 1892. In this second edifice many of the present residents of Merrick received their education; and for years this school produced the best scholars and gave the most thorough instruction of any on Long Island. The early teacher lived on the premises, sleeping over the school room, and cooking his frugal meals upon the rough apology for a box stove. It is said of one, that his chief nutriment was derived from buckwheat cakes in their season, and other kinds of cakes during the rest of the year. An "old boy" remembers that this teacher was famous for his skill in cooking; "and when the process was about to commence the scholars gathered around to watch him flop the cakes on top of the hot iron."

The present school building is modern throughout; the school itself is under the supervision of a competent board of education and the instruction of youth is carefully provided for.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CHURCHES.

"In Merrick," writes Thompson, "the Methodists have a meeting house erected in 1830, and another east in 1840." This first meeting house referred to has been identified as one which stood near Hempstead Turnpike in Freeport about one mile north of the Merrick Road; it was formerly known as the Sand Hill Church. The grave yard with its head stones is yet to be seen in the still kept inclosure where the building formerly stood. The edifice east, to which Thompson refers, was probably the Merrick school house, where services were occasionally held and a regular Sunday school maintained.

The early settlers were largely of the Congregational and Presbyterian denominations. Partaking of Puritan teaching they had "a very strict regard for the Sabbath" and observed its hours with what they called "rigid sanctity." The town of Hempstead, in which of course Merrick was represented, voted in 1650: "If any person neglect to attend public worship without a reasonable excuse he shall pay five guilders for the first offence, 10 for the second and 20 for the third, and for after offence, liable to increased fine or corporal punishment or banishment."

Incidentally may be noticed a custom in Church of England parishes of burying the dead beneath the church edifice and round about its walls,—the clergy under the chancel, pewholders beneath the pews they occupied in life and the poor outside. A Long Island epitaph of the period reads as follows:

“Here I lie, outside the Church door,  
Here I lie, because I am poor;  
The further in, the more they pay,  
But here I lie, as snug as they.”

The first building erected within Merrick precincts for religious services, was undoubtedly the Union Chapel, commenced in the fall of 1875, completed in the summer of 1876, and dedicated Sunday, August 27th of that year, by Methodist Elder Graves. Mr. Raynor P. Seaman, who has done so much good work on Long Island, was the builder and he wrought well, as he always does, in the task then entrusted to his supervision. The chapel, as its name indicated, was for all Protestant denominations, but for no one of them in particular. It stood, where it now stands in an altered shape, on the west side of Merrick avenue, midway between the depot and the Merrick road. Mr. Charles Fox, president of the old south side railroad, and Mr. William E. Hewlett were largely interested in its erection and contributed liberally thereto. Mr. Joseph Carman gave the land. Services were held for several years with considerable regularity, but there was

never a settled minister, his place being supplied by students from the Seminaries, engaged for each Sunday at the rate of seven dollars and fifty cents and expenses. Large congregations resulted for a time, but gradually interest in the services declined. It became difficult to make the necessary payments and reimburse the young theologians. Efforts were made to transfer the property to other denominations in the nearby villages, but without success, and it was finally sold at foreclosure.

Steps were then taken for the formation of a church mission under Episcopal jurisdiction and for repurchasing the Union Chapel property, which was speedily accomplished.

A list of those who contributed to this purpose and the amounts given were as follows:

George T. Hewlett	\$25.00	Arthur Welwood..	\$20.00
Cornelia Van Wyck	15.00	Mrs. Hugh V. Rod-	
Wm. G. Low.....	100.00	dy .....	5.00
John A. King.....	100.00	George Hewlett ..	10.00
Augustus J. Hew-		George M. Hew-	
lett .....	80.00	lett .....	10.00
Whitehead H. Hew-		J. T. Hewlett .....	15.00
lett .....	250.00	B. H. Seaman.....	15.00
Charity T. Seaman.	50.00	Trinity Church,	
Mary Willets .....	25.00	Rockaway .....	69.48
Eliza Searing .....	25.00	Trinity Ch. S. S.,	
Charles Hewlett...	15.00	Rockaway .....	70.00
John I. Lott .....	25.00	F. B. Baldwin ....	10.00

George W. Bergen	\$25.00	Charlotte L. Hew-	
Joseph S. Wright..	10.00	lett .....	\$150.00
Rhoda Wright ....	5.00	Charlotte L. Hew-	
Birasall Post.....	5.00	lett .....	50.00
Rev. John C. Hew-		Mrs. William H.	
lett .....	25.00	Hewlett .....	50.00
Peter T. Hewlett..	10.00	Frankie M. Hew-	
Robert A. Davison.	10.00	lett .....	38.20
Carman Cornelius.	25.00	Mrs. William E.	
Alfred S. Smith...	20.00	Hewlett .....	5.00
Joseph H. Willetts.	10.00	Mrs. J. I. Lott ...	50
Carman & Foreman	25.00	Frank M. Munn..	17.00
Francis Miller ....	5.00	Mrs. Charles Mor-	
Charles V. Combs.	25.00	gan .....	50.00
E. B. Sexton .....	20.00	Thomas H. Clowes	5.00

In addition to the above there were the following gifts:

Mrs. Whitehead H. Hewlett, organ.

Mrs. D. R. Wright of New Haven, Communion Service.

Charlotte L. Hewlett, Bible, Prayer Book, Book of Altar Service, Hymnals, Book Marks and half a dozen Prayer Books for pews.

Julia H. Hewlett, Lectern hangings, one dozen Prayer Books, one half dozen Hymnals.

Trinity Church, Rockaway, Altar.

Prayer Book Society by Mrs. George H. Sexton, fifty Prayer Books, fifty Hymnals.



Frankie M. Hewlett, three Hymnals, with notes.

To furnish a bell, \$176.58.

The total cost of church and furniture was:

Church building and lot .....	\$1,000.00
Pews .....	390.00
Carpet .....	221.56
Chancel furniture .....	70.00
Repairing, etc. ....	37.31
	<hr/>
	\$1,718.87

The Reverend L. S. Russell was in charge of the Mission from December, 1882, until October, 1885. He was succeeded in turn by the Reverend J. A. Locke, the Reverend W. A. Brewer, the Reverend C. A. Jessup, the Rev. W. W. Love, and the Reverend C. F. Olmstead. Of all these, Mr. Brewer was longest in charge and left with his people the kindest recollections.

The church edifice was consecrated by the Right Reverend Bishop Littlejohn, July 26, 1887, and its title vested in the Trustees of the Diocese.

In 1887 a fund was started for building a rectory; a fair was held for the benefit of this fund and \$200 realized therefrom. Plans were obtained, the work was commenced, and the rectory speedily finished. It is one of the few good houses of its character in the diocese.

April 11th, 1890, the church and parish were incorporated under the name of "The Church of the Redeemer."

The first officers were: Rector, Rev. Wm. M. Downey; Wardens, Bezaleel Sexton, Herman H. Cammann; Vestrymen, Benjamin Seaman, George Hewlett, William Hewlett, Theodoret Bartow, Theodore Arms, Frank Miller, P. Gildersleeve, Hugh V. Roddy.

The death of Mr. Sexton, senior warden, in 1891, was a great loss to the parish. The people among whom he lived have caused to be placed in the chancel of the church a memorial window to commemorate his good deeds and hold in loving memory the name of their first senior warden.

Ground was given (1891) by Mr. Cammann upon which to erect a parish house. Authority to build was obtained from the vestry and in April of the following year, the new building was opened and has since been in constant use.

Changes in the church edifice of a pronounced character have several times been made, and repeated as circumstances required, until now, this corporation, with church, rectory and parish house has as complete a property as exists elsewhere on Long Island.

The Rev. Mr. Downey resigned in the spring of 1892. He was succeeded by the Rev. W. A. Crawford Frost, who came in the fall and remained until May, 1896, when he in turn was succeeded by the present incumbent, the Rev. J. W. Barker, D.D.

The present vestry is composed as follows: Wardens, H. H. Cammann, P. R. Jennings; Vestrymen, Benjamin

H. Seaman, William E. Hewlett, Frank S. Miller, Arthur Welwood, Charles N. Kent, Charles A. Welwood, Richard P. Kent, E. C. Cammann.

It may be of interest to the reader to know that the first Episcopal Church building on the Island was erected in 1734 at Setauket, and called first, Christ Church, afterwards Caroline Church, because of gifts received from Queen Caroline. It still stands upon the original site in a goodly state of preservation and has for its rector a man of much antiquarian research, the Rev. Dan Marvin. In olden times the preacher could look from his pulpit through a window, upon the nearby rectory and its adjacent garden. "One hot July afternoon," says an old Chronicle, "the church was full of British officers. Mr. Lyons was preaching, but in the midst of his sermon he chanced to look out of this window, and saw a sight which caused him to interpolate the following unpremeditated remarks, addressed to the officers: 'Here am I preaching the blessed Gospel to you, and there are your redcoats, in my garden, stealing my potatoes.'"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RAILROAD.

The Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad was incorporated April 15th, 1832, and the first cars on Long Island ran over this road April 18th, 1836. It was extended by the Long Island Railroad Company, to Hicksville, in 1837, and on the 25th of July, 1844, a through train ran from Brooklyn to Greenport for the first time.

The South Side Railroad was built in 1866. Mr. Charles Fox, then a resident of Merrick, became its president. The first train from Jamaica through Merrick to Babylon went over this road October 17th, 1867. Great things were anticipated in a local way because of the place being then a railroad town; but no depot, and not so much as a waiting room of any kind whatsoever could be secured—the people were told the road could not afford it. A freight car was asked, as a means for temporary refuge, but not even that was granted—there was no spare car to be had. Finally under the leadership of Mr. William E. Hewlett, people got together on Christmas day (1867) and, before night, built, at their own expense, the first depot. It was not a grand affair, being only twelve feet by six and open at the front, with a shed roof, but it appeared to give satisfaction and was used for some

time. An oil painting of this building is owned by Mr. Hewlett.

Now, in 1900, there are thirteen daily trains between Merrick, New York and Brooklyn, and the time required to City Hall, Manhattan, is one hour and fifteen minutes. This will doubtless be decreased still further, as time goes on.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MERRICK WATER COMPANY.

Until within a comparatively few years the exhaustless supply of pure water on Long Island was proverbial. We have already seen of what use and value it became in the Merrick River, and this was but a single instance among many that might be cited of the thrift and prosperity existing along the banks of numerous other water courses. 'Says Prime: "In traveling on the South Side of the Island from Gravesend to Canoe Place, you necessarily cross one of these streams almost every mile 'till you have counted some sixty or seventy on your journey." It was only necessary to drive a pipe from three to six feet into the ground and attach thereto a pump, in order to secure a bountiful supply of the best and purest water anywhere obtainable. Windmills were called into requisition and the landscape was dotted with them in every direction. But, most unfortunately for the interests of the people, the Brooklyn Water Company was permitted to enter this garden spot of the State and withdraw, through its reservoirs and pumping stations, not only the surplus, but even the ordinary supply derived from surface and subterranean streams and springs. A more disastrous and far reaching catastrophe to the rights of citizens and

productiveness of soil was never recorded. Streams dried up; water wheels became idle, for there was no longer power to turn them; mills fell into decay and vegetation suffered. This condition still exists in a lesser degree at the present day, but it is only a question of time when eviction of the Brooklyn company will follow; and even now, from the numerous suits and injunctions entered, it is more amenable to the rights of the people, and guards against the useless waste which at one time characterized its action.

The Merrick Water Company was incorporated June 8th, 1895. The object stated was to furnish pure water in abundant quantities, distributed through pipes underground to citizens desirous of obtaining it and making application therefor. A site was selected, just north of Kirkwood and west of the Church property on Merrick Avenue. Numerous pipe wells were driven a distance of 38 feet; a windmill of large capacity was erected, 85 feet from the ground, and a tank, holding 16,000 gallons placed upon its tower, 40 feet high. Pipes were laid in the various avenues, and the supply of pure water thus furnished has been sufficient and never failing. The entire village can thus be furnished, and arrangements have been made, so that whenever necessary the present motive power of the company can be supplemented by steam or other agent.

But hardly had the Merrick company completed its plant, ere the Brooklyn concern began to lay pipes, sink

wells and erect a pumping station within limits from which the Merrick company by previous right and occupancy derived its own supply—the one corporation, because of its power and magnitude, apparently going behind both Statute and Common law, usurping rights held existant by the Courts, and paying little or no attention to those of the smaller and local company. But, as already predicted, it is believed these encroachments are short lived and will be followed by a not far distant extermination of the very objectionable neighbor—so unneighborly in its present contentions.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MERRICK LIBRARY.

We find record of Parish and Sunday School Libraries with limited resources, for a score or more of years; and still earlier there may have been a small collection of books in the public school. But no attempt worthy of notice in this direction was made until the spring of 1891, when the proprietors of the *Messenger*, a monthly parish newspaper, founded "The Merrick Free Circulating Library." It first saw light in the hay loft of a vacant stable and boasted fully fifty volumes upon improvised shelves. During the first summer, its patrons numbered from twelve to fifteen weekly. In the fall of that year the library was removed to a building altered for the purpose on Merrick Avenue, and the change resulted in an increase of volumes and readers. Again, in 1892, another removal became necessary and in this last resting place it remained until the fall of 1895, when new quarters were established in the Tank Tower of the Merrick Water Company.

April 21st, 1897, the present Merrick Library was incorporated. In anticipation of this a building had already been commenced, made possible by generous donations, and the work was speedily pushed to completion.

The new building is on the northeast corner of Kirkwood and Merrick Avenues, occupying a delightful site, beneath the shade of beautiful trees, and with a well kept lawn in front. It is perfect in construction and appointments and justly merits, as it has received, the approval and patronage of a community residing even far beyond the limits of Merrick. Upon its shelves there are now over twelve hundred volumes, and the number is constantly increasing. Taken as a whole, the collection is superior to that of the average village library, and the true book lover will here find an occasional work not elsewhere easily discovered, which would merit special attention in the valuable collections of Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Books are loaned to any person, applying for them, who is known to the librarian or introduced by a member, and the library is open at convenient hours for the delivery of books and use as a reading room. It is furnished with small tables, stationery and other conveniences for patrons.

There is always to be had a complete file of the leading magazines, illustrated weekly newspapers, reviews and religious periodicals. Maps—modern and ancient—adorn the walls, while for those desiring to consult books of reference, which may not be taken from the building, every facility is afforded.

Any person who pays \$2 annually becomes thereby a member of the association when elected by the Board of

Trustees. The payment of \$25 at one time constitutes life membership.

In connection with the Library is a museum of Long Island relics and curiosities which promises to be of very considerable interest and value.

The officers at present are: President, Edward C. Cammann; Vice President and Treasurer, Richard P. Kent; Secretary, E. B. Willetts, Jr.; Librarian, Miss Lina Miller; Trustees, H. H. Cammann, Chas. N. Kent, P. R. Jennings, E. C. Cammann, Richard P. Kent, Wm. E. Hewlett, J. W. Birch, E. B. Willetts, Jr., Charles N. Kent, Jr.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CAMP MEETING GROUNDS.

The Long Island Camp Meeting Association, after experimenting in various places, during the previous five years, reorganizing in 1869, in Merrick, selecting the grounds they have since occupied, for their first meeting, and "agreeing to purchase for permanent use if found suitable." The first convocation approved the purchase which was accordingly made at the close of the first assembly. The grounds are situated less than a mile north from the depot, east of Merrick avenue, or, as it is there called, Whale Neck Road. They embrace nearly sixty acres and the first cost including avenues, grading, water supply and necessary buildings was \$26,000.

At present (1900) there are nearly sixty houses within the enclosure, most of which are occupied during the summer months, when the average population is about three hundred. During regular camp meeting sessions this number is largely increased. "We have known," said the Superintendent, "as many as ten thousand here at one time; but, then," he added, "that was before the days of Coney Island and Long Beach!" Cottages one story high rent during the season for \$30 and those two stories high bring from \$50 upwards.

The association was early incorporated, and granted a special act by the Legislature under which it is authorized to purchase and hold real estate to the extent in value of two hundred thousand dollars, and to possess an income of not exceeding thirty thousand dollars. One hundred acres of land, with the property thereon, is made exempt from taxation. The trustees are authorized to issue scrip, payable, as the interests of the association will permit, to the amount of seventy thousand dollars. All surplus monies are to be applied to the loan fund of the M. E. Church Extension Society.

The present Secretary and Superintendent is Mr. J. E. Lucky, of Brooklyn.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### RETROSPECTIVE.

In some particulars—those of the most important—the Merrick of to-day is not unlike the Merrick of 1643. Natural causes have but served to augment its attractions and the especial purity of its atmosphere remains uncontaminated and unchanged. There is something remarkable in this last feature, which from a scientific standpoint has never been satisfactorily accounted for. Within Merrick's boundaries, and for a short distance east and west, breezes from off old Ocean in crossing the Great Bay undergo a radical change whereby the harsh and salty elements in the air disappear, leaving it remarkably soothing and invigorating to a degree found only in this particular locality.

It is certain that the land from the Bay northward has been "making in" during a long period of years—possibly since or even before the settlement of our first Rock Smith and his associates. Opposite Merrick docks, excavations, at a depth of nearly four feet, discover remains of a curduroy road, used, as is remembered by old settlers, for the wagons and ox carts in which all freight arriving by boat from New York was transported to Hempstead and other villages by way of Whale Neck Road.

During the summer of 1899 a large bathing pool with bath houses adjoining was constructed, west of Merrick Canal, south of the boat house. In the course of excavation, beach sand was reached at an even depth of nearly four feet, and, upon the sand, Indian "pot sticks," four in number—sound and strong as if but recently cut from trees—were upturned; nearby as if to shade those who watched the kettle boil, suspended from the pot sticks, stood the stump of what had been once a large maple tree—larger indeed than is now often met with. The stump, at its top was at least two feet below the present land surface.

But while the land has thus been making in, the southerly beaches, under prevailing winds and tides, undergo constant changes in both directions. Said one, familiar from observation: "The sand on this beach is a changing all the time. Hollers now'll be hills by 'me by. The wind'll scoop out a hold and pile up a hill in no time. It handles sand about the same way it drifts snow."

It is claimed by some well informed people, that at a period it is not now possible to designate there was no great South Bay—waves direct from the Atlantic, with no intervening sand bar rolled in upon Merrick marshes and Merrick's southern shore was then the true ocean beach. The sand formation now dividing bay from ocean, we are told, is of more recent origin—an aggregation of shifting sands, accumulated by constant motion of wind and tide.

There may also be noted, in passing, the existence of a strong belief, frequently found in old documents, that the whole of Long Island was at one time a part of the main land—connected therewith from east to west,—a separation having been wrought by volcanic upheavals.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### IN CONCLUSION.

The writer's personal attachment to Merrick; his strong appreciation of its many advantages for suburban homes, and the friendships which have there been formed and augmented, resulted in a desire to know more of its history—and hence, during otherwise leisure hours these pages have been written.

The future of Merrick may be predicted with a moderate degree of accuracy. Its comparatively slow growth in the past is due to natural causes which will ultimately show advantageous results. Speculation in lands, the bane of so many suburban towns, has here never been attempted. "Corner lots at a bargain," "Country homes at a great sacrifice," and other like announcements never appear in connection with our real estate. With its broad avenues and cultivated acres, its attractive residences and beautiful lawns, the remaining land is largely held by those who can so afford to keep it, until such time as a transfer is effected—not in lots measured in square feet, but in acres—to would-be residents of some means and reputation, who will join with those already here happily domiciled, in making Merrick an aggregation of homes of the better class, free from the petty annoyances of an ordinary country village.



## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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Copy of the original commission issued to Jonathan Smith (Rock) Merrick:

Benjamin Fletcher, Capt Gen'll and Governor in Chiefe of his Maj'ties Province of New Yorke, and all the Territories and Tracts of Land depending thereon in America, & Vice Admirall of the Same; his Majties Leut. and Commander in Chiefe of the Militia and of all the forces by Sea and Land within his Maj'ties Collony of Connecticutt, and of all the Forts and places of strength within the Same:

By Virtue of the power and Authority to me given by his Maj'tie under his great Seal of England, I doe hereby constitute and appoint you, Jonathan Smith, to be Quartermaster of the Troope of Millitia Horse Whereof Daniel Whitehead is Captaine. You are therefore carefully and dilligently to discharge the duty of Quartermaster to the said Troope by doing and performing all and all manner of things thereunto bellonging, and you are to observe and follow Such Orders and Directions as you shall from time to time receive from me or any other your Superior officer or officers, according to the rules and discipline of Warr, in pursuance to the trust hereby Re-

posed in you, and for soe doing this shall be your sufficient Warrant and Commission. Given under my hand and Seal att Arms Att fort William Henry in New Yorke on the ninth day of Jully in the ninth year of his majesties Reign, Anno Domino 1697.

BEN FLETCHER.

By his Excellencies Command.

DAN HONAN.

Note.—The original of this commission is in the possession of Mrs. Elijah Smith, Merrick. She also has a similar commission issued to the same officer, but signed by "George Clinton, "Admiral of the *White Squadron* of her Majesties fleet."

Extract from Philip Hone's diary:

*January 14, 1835.*

"The rage for speculating in lands on Long Island is one of the bubbles of the day. Men in moderate circumstances have become immensely rich merely by the good fortune of owning farms of a few acres of this chosen land. Abraham Schermerhorn has sold his farm of 170 acres at Gowanus, three miles from Brooklyn, at \$600 per acre. Four years ago, having got out of conceit of it as a residence, he offered it for sale at \$20,000, and would have taken \$18,000. To-day he pockets \$102,000 and regrets that he sold it so cheap!"

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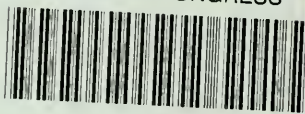
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